Protect Our Species

Earth Day 2019

Faith Leader’s Toolkit
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About This Toolkit

There are many ways in which you as a faith leader, faith-based organization, or a person of faith can help Protect Our Species through exercising your faith tradition. Earth Day (April 22) 2019 marks the 49th anniversary of the first Earth Day. The theme for this year is Protect Our Species!

Nature’s gifts to our planet are the species that we know and love, along with the many more that we have yet to discover. Unfortunately, human beings have irrevocably upset the balance of nature and, as a result, the world is facing the greatest rate of extinction since we lost the dinosaurs more than 60 million years ago. But unlike the fate of the dinosaurs, the rapid extinction of species in our world today is the result of human activity.

The unprecedented global destruction and rapid reduction of plant and animal wildlife populations are directly linked to causes driven by human activity: climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, trafficking and poaching, unsustainable agriculture, pollution, and pesticides to name a few.

The impacts are far-reaching.

All living things have value in and of themselves and each one plays a unique role in the complex web of life. We must protect our species if we want to survive ourselves.

This toolkit has resources for clergy, lay leaders, religious educators, and people of faith to learn, reflect, and act to Protect Our Species. It includes lesson plans to engage children, youth, and adults in having agency and being part of the solution. Resources and conversation starters for a variety of faith traditions are intended to help your faith community reflect and take action.
A Message to Leaders and Communities of Faith

As a person of faith or faith-based organization, you have a unique opportunity to protect all species threatened by extinction within our generation.

Rapid species loss, many scientists are calling the Sixth Extinction, impacts values core to all faith traditions: stewardship of the environment on which we all depend, caring for the health of our communities, and the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable.

“From the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) in Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism, to the laws which relate to tza’ar ba’alei hayim (avoiding the suffering/pain of living creatures) in Judaism, we encounter the interdependence of life. The Jainist notion of ‘reverence for life’, the pronouncement in Genesis that ‘it was good’ and the Islamic belief that all species are Muslim allow us to come to a realization, or a deeper appreciation, that non-human animals have value in our religious traditions, as well as in our hearts and homes.” Rev. Barbara Allen, Animals in Religion.

We invite you to join communities of faith across the world in using Earth Day 2019’s Protect Our Species Campaign to respond to the urgent and unprecedented problem created by rapid species extinction and wildlife population loss, by deepening your understanding of the issue, and engaging your faith community in action.
Communities are Responding to Help Protect Our Species

Here are just a few ways communities are responding already:

• Religious educators are integrating Save Our Species content into their programming for children, youth, and adults;
• Clergy are committing to speak from the pulpit about rapid species loss, and how intrinsically linked it is to the production of food, water, and clean air, the control of climate and disease, and to our spiritual wellbeing;
• Communities are making plans to participate in interfaith dialogues, teach-ins, and service projects.

How will Earth Day 2019 elevate the ethical principles of your faith tradition, that inform your relationship with other living things, and start a process for all of us to take personal responsibility?

Tell us how your faith community will participate in Earth Day 2019.

We’d love to hear from you!

HERE ARE A FEW OF THOSE COMMUNITIES:

Over 2,500 Muslim and Jewish women throughout the United States, Canada, and England participate in Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom chapters! This year, they’re joining the Protect Our Species Campaign to help protect species in their communities.

The Catholic Climate Covenant (CCC) created an Earth Day 2019 program, *All Creation Gives God Praise: "Protecting Biodiversity in a Time of Climate Crisis"!!* Members of the CCC will be using this program to educate their communities about biodiversity and species loss.

Earth Circle, a community group in Grand Rapids, MN is working with religious communities in their area to plant pollinator gardens on their grounds.

Blessed Earth, a Lexington, Kentucky based not-for-profit organization, is co-sponsoring a Protect Our Species event in Washington, DC, with a focus on trees.

Students from Madonna Catholic School, in Toronto, Ontario will be participating in the Earth Day 2019 Protect Our Species theme by planning an Interfaith Youth Alliance Movement (IYAM Toronto) event, and joining students of different faiths together to respond to the issue of climate change.
What Is Happening to the Species on our Planet?

A vast number of animals and plants have gone extinct in recent centuries due to human activity, especially since the industrial revolution. Many others are in serious decline and threatened with extinction, which affects genetic variation and biodiversity, among other issues.

- The number of land animals has fallen by 40% since 1970.
- In the same time period, marine animal populations have also fallen by 40%.
- 40% of the world's 11,000 bird species are in decline.
- Animal populations in freshwater ecosystems have plummeted by 75% since 1970.
- Insect populations have declined by 75% in some parts of the world.
- About a quarter of the world's coral reefs have already been damaged beyond repair, and 75% of the world's coral reefs are at risk from local and global stresses.
- It is estimated that humans have impacted 83% of Earth's land surface, which has affected many ecosystems as well as the range in which specific species of wildlife used to exist.
Developed nations have seen benefits in economic growth from the exploitation of their own ecosystems and species as well as those of developing nations.\textsuperscript{12} The biggest declines we are seeing now in plant and animal populations are happening in low-income, developing nations, mirroring declines in wildlife that occurred in wealthier nations long ago. The last wolf in the UK, for example, was killed in 1680.\textsuperscript{13} Developed countries now exploit the resources of the developing world to continue their growth. Between 1990 and 2008, around a third of the world’s timber, beef, and soya – products whose harvest causes deforestation globally – were imported by the EU.\textsuperscript{14}

WE ARE FACING A NEW MASS EXTINCTION

Academics and others debate if we are already facing a new process of mass extinction, such as those the world has experienced over the millennia. But even if that is not the case, we know that thousands of species are endangered, and most flora and fauna, from land and sea, have seen their numbers severely reduced.

Some argue that species have disappeared before and that the current decline is just part of a natural cycle. But this conclusion is inaccurate. All other processes of global mass extinction in the history of the planet happened because of a catastrophic natural event. However, none of them were the result of human intervention, as is the case for the current period of mass extinction.

According to Peter Ward from the University of Washington, what we are experiencing today is strikingly similar to the dinosaur-killing event of 65 million years ago, when a planet already stressed by sudden changes in its climate was knocked into mass extinction by the impact of asteroids.\textsuperscript{15} The mass extinction we are going through has been unfolding because of the intervention of a single species: homo sapiens. Humans have had an outsized negative impact on most other species around the world. Human activity has caused a dramatic reduction in population sizes and in the total number of species; thousands have already disappeared and many more are threatened with extinction.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{cumulative_extinctions.png}
\caption{Cumulative vertebrate species recorded as extinct or extinct in the wild by the IUCN (2012). Graphs show the percentage of the number of species evaluated among mammals (3513; 100% of those described), birds (10,425; 100%), reptiles (4443; 44%), amphibians (644; 80%), fishes (12,457; 36%), and all vertebrates combined (39,223; 50%). Dashed black curve represents the number of extinctions expected under a constant standard background rate of 2 E/MSY. Conservative estimate. Image and caption courtesy of Cobollos et al (2015).}
\end{figure}

Graphic from \url{http://tinyurl.com/y4ufjlow}
What Is Causing this Extinction Process?

OVEREXPLOITATION OF SPECIES

**Food:** Since the dawn of the human species, we have relied on plants and other animals for food. As the human population skyrocketed, this consumption quickly became unsustainable. We have overfished our waters and hunted many species of animals to extinction. It is unlikely that humans will ever stop consuming other animals completely, but it is entirely possible for us to consume them in a sustainable way.

**Labor:** Humans have used animals as laborers and entertainment for thousands of years, often causing them harm. Elephants, for example, are taken from their natural habitat to carry cargo or perform for tourists or being part of a circus. These animals are usually subjected to inhumane treatment until they submit to commands.

**Illegal wildlife trade:** Illegal hunting — known as poaching — and illegal trade of wildlife products is a major direct threat to the future of many of the world’s most threatened species. Not all wildlife trade is illegal but determining if wildlife products were illegally sourced is a challenge for authorities. The desire for products made of Giraffe skin has been one of the major drivers of that species’ decline. Elephants, rhinos, pangolins, tigers, turtles, birds, and hundreds of other animal species face harm and potential extinction because of illegal poaching. Plants, are also widely traded in less than legal markets. Orchids, for example, are broadly covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), making it illegal to trade orchids internationally without CITES permits yet international trade of wild orchids continues.29
HABITAT LOSS

Habitat destruction: A bulldozer pushing down trees is the iconic image of habitat destruction. Other ways people directly destroy habitat: filling in wetlands, dredging rivers, mowing fields, and cutting down trees.

Habitat fragmentation: Much of the remaining terrestrial wildlife habitat has been cut up into fragments by roads and development. Aquatic species’ habitats have been split up by dams and water diversions. These remaining fragments may be too small to support species that need larger territories to find mates and food. The loss and fragmentation of habitats also makes it difficult for migratory species to find places to rest and feed along their migration routes.

Habitat degradation: Habitats can become so degraded they can no longer support native wildlife, as a result of pollution, invasive species and disruption of ecosystem processes, such as the changing intensity of fires in an ecosystem. Recently, pesticide use has been recognized as another major cause of habitat degradation. Heavy pesticide use in agricultural areas can leave downstream habitats dangerous for some species, especially certain invertebrates and plants.
CLIMATE CHANGE

As climate change alters the Earth’s temperature and weather patterns, it also impacts plant and animal life. Scientists expect that the number, range, and variety of species will decline greatly as global temperatures continue to rise.32

Deforestation, livestock, and the burning of fossil fuels for energy are some of the biggest contributors to global warming. Livestock accounts for between 14.5% and 18% of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.33 Those emissions come from cattle belches, flatulence, and waste; the fertilizer production for feed crops; general farm associated emissions; and the processes involved in growing feed crops.34 Research conducted by the Worldwatch Institute’s Nourishing the Planet Project also shows that animal waste releases methane and nitrous oxide, greenhouse gases that are much more potent than carbon dioxide. Research shows that a rise in income results in an increase in the consumption of meat and dairy products. The populations of industrial countries consume twice as much meat as those in developing countries.35 Worldwide meat production has tripled over the last four decades and increased 20% in the last 10 years. This information suggests that we should cut back on our consumption of meat and dairy.

GLOBAL HOMOGENIZATION OF FLORA AND FAUNA36

Human actions, such as spreading non-native species, have increasingly driven evolution. This is known as the global homogenization of flora and fauna. Biotic homogenization is an emerging, yet pervasive, threat in the ongoing biodiversity crisis.37 Originally, ecologists defined biotic homogenization as the replacement of native species by exotic or introduced species, but this phenomenon is now more broadly recognized as the process by which ecosystems lose their biological uniqueness and uniformity grows.38 As global transportation becomes faster and more frequent, it is inevitable that species intermixing will increase. Unique local flora or fauna that become extinct are often replaced by already widespread flora or fauna that are more adapted to tolerate human activities. This process is affecting all aspects of our natural world. For example, 10 of the 12 original forest bird species have been lost due to the introduction of the brown tree snake.39 Biological homogenization qualifies as a global environmental catastrophe. The Earth has never witnessed such a broad and complete reorganization of species distribution, in which animals, plants, and other organisms have been translocated on a global scale.

Over the last few centuries, humans have essentially become the top predator on land and across the sea. In doing so, humanity is using 25-40% of the planet’s net primary production.40 As we continue to expand our use of land and resources, the capacity of species to survive is constantly reduced.
Humanity has become a massive force in directing evolution. This is most apparent in the domestication of animals and the cultivation of crops over thousands of years. “We are directly manipulating genomes by artificial selection and molecular techniques, and indirectly by managing ecosystems and populations to conserve them,” says Erle Ellis, an expert on the Anthropocene, with the University of Maryland.

**OTHER**

In countries around the world, policies have been enacted that have led to the extinction or near extinction of specific species, such as large predators in the U.S. and Europe. Chemical products, especially neonicotinoid pesticides, have been shown to harm bees and other pollinators. These chemicals have been linked to a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder, where bees get separated from their hives. The decline in bees poses a serious threat, as bees are responsible for pollinating much of the food we grow to feed ourselves and livestock. Without bees, the global food supply chain would be irreparably damaged.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**ARTICLES/BLOGS/READINGS**

**Worldwide Decline of the Entomofauna: A Review of its Drivers** – *Science Direct*
The biodiversity of insects is threatened worldwide. This study presents a comprehensive review of 73 historical reports of insect declines from across the globe, and systematically assesses the underlying drivers. This work reveals dramatic rates of decline that may lead to the extinction of 40% of the world’s insect species over the next few decades.

**How Does Climate Change Affect Biodiversity?** – *Sciencing*
This article talks about the effects of climate change on the environment, land, and ocean biodiversity.

**Ecological Footprint** – *Footprint Network*
https://www.footprintnetwork.org/our-work/ecological-footprint/
This article gives background information on what an ecological footprint is.

**Ways YOU Are Driving the Sixth Extinction of Species** – *One Green Planet*
https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/how-you-are-driving-the-sixth-extinction-of-species/
This article talks about three daily behaviors that are contributing to species extinction and the ways we can change those habits for the better.

**Politicians are Complicit in the Killing of our Insects** – *The Guardian*
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/12/politicians-killing-insects-ecosystems
This article identifies current agri-business practices as a key driver towards this mass insect extinction: habitat loss and conversion to intensive agriculture with its associated use of pesticides.
REFLECT: How Does This Problem Relate to Your Faith?

In this section you will find a collection of Faith Statements on the Environment which can help you connect the issue of species loss with your faith tradition or the faith traditions of others. From the Baha’i faith to Zoroastrianism, faith traditions across the globe have adopted statements about the urgent need to respond to environmental concerns.

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<td>Universal Responsibility and the Environment- Address at the Rio Earth Summit</td>
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<td><strong>CHRISTIANITY</strong></td>
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<td>Encyclical Letter Laudato Si’ of the Holy Father Francis on Care for our Common Home</td>
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<td>Statements from the Doctrine and Covenants on Animals</td>
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<td>Selected Scriptures and Church Leader Statements on Environmental Stewardship and Conservation</td>
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<td>ZOROASTRIANISM</td>
<td>Zoroastrian Statement on the Environment</td>
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The faith statements above, represent the largest faiths globally and within the U.S. based on data from the Pew Research Center. Faith groups who have worked with Earth Day Network on previous campaigns have also been included. We strive to be inclusive but know that our list is not exhaustive. To add a statement from your faith, contact us at faith@earthday.org
ACT: Engage Your Faith Community to Protect Our Species

How you relate to other living things has a great impact on their survival. We hope that learning about the problems facing all species on the planet, and reading the statements put forward by your own faith, has inspired you to take some steps and join a global movement of people who want to Protect Our Species.

This section of the Toolkit provides ideas and resources that you can use to act and engage others in your faith community or even in your household.

Delivering a Protect Our Species Sermon this Earth Day (April 22):

We invite you to join faith leaders from across the globe who are responding to the urgent threat of rapid species extinction by speaking from the pulpit on Earth Day. We hope this resource will help you elevate the ethical principles of your faith tradition that inform your relationship with other living things, and start a process for all of us to take personal responsibility.

PRAYER RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

The following links to prayer resources by faith tradition are intended to help you.

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<td><em>The Worship of Fire, Water, the Earth, and Lights in Zoroastrianism</em></td>
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We are always striving to update and improve this resource. If you are from a faith group or organization and have access to or know of quality faith-based environmental resources, please email us at faith@earthday.org.
Engage Your Faith Community to Organize for Earth Day 2019:

We invite you to join our Earth Day 2019 campaign to respond to the threats that are affecting the survival of all species, including our own.

Your participation on Earth Day (April 22), during Earth Week (April 22-28), and throughout the year will help educate and mobilize action to prevent further extinction of species and the decline of species populations, genetic variation, and habitat.

Earth Day Network has developed Toolkits that contain ideas for actions and resources to help you and your communities participate in Earth Day 2019’s Protect Our Species campaign.

If you are ready to take the lead in educating and activating others to Protect Our Species, on this page and the following section you will find a host of resources and suggestions for actions you can take directly, use to engage the members of your faith community, or that you can suggest to your family members, co-workers and friends.

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR EARTH DAY 2019:

**Organize an Event on Earth Day:** On April 22nd you can organize an event or activity for Earth Day. The theme this year is Protect Our Species, and we have created toolkits to help you. Our Earth Day Organizers Toolkit, the Protect Our Species Primer, and Action Toolkit give you both the process and the content to organize an effective and powerful activity or event.

**Host a Teach-In:** The goal of an Earth Day 2019 Teach-In is to educate the members of your community about the issue of rapid species loss; how this problem impacts your local area, the country and the world; and empower your faith community and larger community to take informed personal and civic action to reduce rapid species loss. For a complete toolkit on how to host an Earth Day 2019 Teach-In please go here. Use it in combination with content from the Protect Our Species Primer and Action Toolkit.

**Take Part in Climate Education Week:** Climate Education Week will start on Monday, April 15th. The Climate Education Week Toolkit will provide you with a week of activities for K-12 students to learn about the problem and take action to Protect Our Species.

**Mobilize your Campus:** For students, faculty, and staff at higher education institutions, check out the MobilizeU Toolkit that provides a step by step guide to organizing your campus.

**Become a partner:** Are you interested in becoming a formal partner for Earth Day? As a partner, you will have access to the Earth Day 2019 official logo to add to your website and materials, as well as tips and updates about opportunities. Look for our partnership agreement and follow a few easy steps described on our website.

**Conduct a “Protect Our Species” communications campaign** to activate millions of people using the #EarthDay2019 and #ProtectOurSpecies hashtags and tagging us @EarthDayNetwork
A Good First Step:

CREATE A STEWARDSHIP TEAM:

If your faith community doesn’t already have one, create a stewardship team to guide and lead your faith community in its biodiversity initiatives and other initiatives on behalf of the environment. If you have a stewardship team, share this guide, the Protect Our Species Primer and Action Toolkit, and discuss how your stewardship team can lead the faith community in protecting endangered plant and animal species. See more resources on how to form a Stewardship Team at U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Star Faith community resources on how to engage and activate your Stewardship Team and How to Build an Effective Green Team.

OTHER EARTH DAY 2019 IDEAS:

1. Join an Invasive Species Clean-Up with a local organization: Invasive plant species can take over and change biodiverse landscapes into monocultures, where it’s difficult for native plants and animal species to thrive. Consult with your local nature or wildlife center to identify invasive species in your community and create a plan of action.

2. Organize a Recycling Drive or a Clean-Up: Improper disposal of recyclable items or waste can be very harmful to wildlife. Coordinate a general recycling drive or recycle something more specific like denim or batteries.

3. Screen an Environmental Film: Environmental films including Eating Animals and Living the Change can be accessed free of charge or at low cost.

4. Hold a Plastic-Free Vegetarian or Vegan Pot Luck or Event: Eating less meat can have positive effects on our ecosystem. Invite guests to bring a vegan or vegetarian food item along with their own reusable cups, plates and utensils. You can even ask people to bring recipe cards for their dish so more plant-based meals can happen in your community after Earth Day!

5. Host a Tree Planting: Trees and plants provide habitat, shade, and beauty. Learn about native species in your community and make a plan for Earth Day.

6. Plant a Garden: Planting a garden, whether in a raised bed, window box, or on your faith community’s property, can engage your congregation in stewardship and the beauties of nature.

7. Make Your Faith Community a Pesticide Free Zone: Learn the benefits of Making Your Faith Community a “Pesticide Free Zone”.

8. Sponsor a Beach Clean Up: Although trash originates on land, much ends up on the beaches and in our oceans. Coastal regions provide homes to thousands of different species of plants and animals. Sponsoring a beach clean-up will make life safer and better for the people who depend on the beach for their livelihood and the plants and animals that rely on the beach for their survival.

9. Learn about what your city is doing to Protect Our Species: Ask your local elected officials to host a global day of conversation to discuss biodiversity in your community. Learn more here.

10. Host an Outdoor Worship Service.
Engaging Children and Youth:

**CD SUN CATCHERS**

**Topic:** Reducing Bird Collisions

**Time:** ~25 minutes

**Objective:** Participants will learn that birds are an important part of our communities, and that our faith tells us, we have a special responsibility to help protect them. Even the youngest people can make a big difference.

**Supplies:**
- Have participants/community members bring in old CD’s or DVD’s (one or more per participant)
- Permanent Markers
- Yarn (2 feet per participant)
- Newspaper to protect your work surface

Optional: Invite participants to bring a special item from home that represents birds. It can be a picture from a magazine, a stuffed animal, book, etc.

For installing at home (if appropriate)
- Nails
- Hammer

**Resources for Leaders:**
- Why do Birds Matter?
- Why Birds Hit Windows- And How You Can Help Prevent It
- Birds by State
- Colorful CD Sun Catchers

---

**Welcome/Introduction**

Leader: We’re joining millions of people across the planet who are celebrating Earth Day! This year, the theme of Earth Day is Protect Our Species. We’ll be learning about what our faith tells us about our special responsibility to help protect plants and animals, and how we can help protect birds in our community.

**Opening Prayer:** See [Prayer Resource page](#)

**Scripture or Reading:** See [Prayer Resource page](#)

**The Importance of Birds**

Leader: Birds are an important part of our community by helping to grow plants (by dispersing seeds and helping to pollinate). Many countries across the world have their own special bird. See a list of national birds by country [here](#).

**The Problem**

Leader: Every year millions of birds collide with windows because they often see their own reflection or nature, reflected in the window.

Leader: If participants brought an item from home that represents a bird, have them share their item and describe what makes it special. What are some things you can do to help protect birds in our community?

Let participants offer suggestions, and suggest a few ideas to get them thinking about how they can reuse products in their homes to address the problem.

**Activity:**

Pass out a CD to each participant and several permanent markers. Have participants decorate CD’s with colorful drawings on both sides. When they’re done drawing, thread yarn through the hole and tie at one end. CD’s can be hung in front of windows either outside or inside within your faith community or at home.

**Closing:**

Ask the children what they have learned today. Why is protecting birds important to our faith?

**Closing Prayer:** See [Prayer Resource page](#)
MAKE A BEE CONDO WITH REPURPOSED MATERIALS  AGES 7-9

**Topic:** Rapid species loss

**Time:** Week 1, ~25 minutes; Week 2, ~30 minutes

**Objective:** To understand that as humans there are choices we can make to help other species.

**Resources for Teachers:**
- [Bee hotels in Paris & Books for Children](#)
- [What You Need to Know About Bees and How You Can Help to Protect Them](#)

**Supplies for Week 1:**
- One clean 18.6 oz or 18.8 oz can per participant. Tip- Find a can opener that leaves smooth edges so participants reduce the risk of cutting themselves.
- Enough acrylic paint in a variety of colors to paint the cans (3-4 coats)
- Mod Podge (Made Everyday with Dana says equal parts Mod Podge and paint can be mixed to help it stick on the can better)
- Baby food jars to mix/hold the paint
- One small foam paint brush for each participant (small enough to dip into the baby food jar)
- Newspaper to cover your work surface

**Prep work:**
- This activity can be completed with repurposed materials, so if you don’t already have a space to collect scrap paper and clean cans, you’ll want to start.
- Participants should paint their cans one week prior to constructing their bee condo
- Adults can prepare paper, ~30 sheets per participant cut to various heights, not longer than the height of the can
- Communicate to parents that you’ll be participating in this activity, and give them the option to opt-out if their child has a bee allergy.
- Have a backup plan for participants who might opt-out
- Select a children’s book about the decline in bee species

**Week 1 Welcome/Introduction:**

Around the world, we’re experiencing a significant decline in bee species. This is a problem because humans need bees to pollinate plants that we depend on for food. As humans, we have a special responsibility to help bees and other insects. Over the next two weeks we’ll be building habitats for bees.

**Opening Prayer:** See [Prayer Resource page](#)

**Scripture or Reading:** See [Prayer Resource page](#)

- Read a book about the decline in bee species.

**Notes for Teachers:**

According to Rusty Burlew, a master beekeeper and author of the HoneyBeeSuite blog, “…if you really want to help native bees…you need only remember three things: plant more flowers, use fewer pesticides, and leave some areas undisturbed.” Burlew suggests when considering habitats for bees that it’s important to consider biodiversity and that by having tunnels of various sizes your habitat can appeal to a variety of bee species.
Week 1 Activity:
• Cover the work surface with newspaper
• Pass out one clean 18.6 oz or 18.8 oz can to each participant.
• Give each participant an empty baby food jar and paint brush
• Have children select their paint color, and add equal parts paint and Mod Podge to the jar and mix
• Paint the can (3-4 coats)
• Move cans to a safe place, label the can with the child’s name and allow to dry

Closing Prayer: See Prayer Resource page

Week 2 Activity:

Opening Prayer: See Prayer Resource page

Scripture or Reading: See Prayer Resource page
• Each student should find their can from the week before
• Using a variety of pencils, markers, etc. of various widths, take your paper and roll ~5 times around, and adhere it with a piece of tape for ~30 sheets of paper.
• Add a thin layer of glue to the bottom of your can and, adhere the toilet paper tubes.
• Fill in the spaces with your rolled sheets of paper.
• Tie the yarn around the bee condo and find a secure, sunny spot to hang it about 3 feet off the ground

Closing:
Ask the children what they have learned today. Why is protecting bees important to our faith?

Closing Prayer: See Prayer Resource page
LEAD AN INVASIVE SPECIES CLEAN-UP

**Topic:** Biodiversity

**Objective:** To empower youth to create an event that educates themselves and their communities about the negative impact of invasive plant species.

**Supplies:**
- Each participant should have a pair of gardening gloves, comfortable shoes, a water bottle, and sun protection.
- Visuals to help people identify native plants vs. invasive species
- Reusable bins, cardboard boxes, or paper bags are a good way to collect invasive species.
- First aid kit

**Prep work:**
- Learn about the issue of invasive species
- Watch the Nature Conservancy’s video [Invasive Species 101](#)
- Work with your adult leaders to invite an expert from within your faith tradition or from a nature conservancy or wildlife center to speak to your group about the problem of invasive species and how to identify harmful species.
- Put together a presentation for your faith community’s leadership about what you have learned and how sponsoring a clean-up can help.
- Create a flyer to educate others about what invasive plant species look like in your area and with information about your clean-up.
- Promote your event
- Talk with adult leadership and conservation experts about the best way to dispose of invasive species and make a plan.
- Talk with your adult leaders and religious education professionals to provide guidance on age appropriate activities and care for younger participants.
- Invite your religious leader to attend the event and offer a blessing.

**Blessing:** Have your faith leader or a volunteer offer a blessing as you set out on your invasive species clean-up.

**Welcome/Introduction:**
Invasive plant species can take over and change biodiverse landscapes into monocultures, creating areas where it’s difficult for native plants and animal species to exist. By removing invasive plant species, you make room for native plants and animal species to thrive.

**Activity:**
- After you’ve introduced the activity and welcomed everyone, take time to go over what species you’ll be removing and what plant species not to remove. Having visuals can make understanding clearer.
- Communicate any safety issues including what people should do if they encounter wildlife, insect bites, etc.
- Everyone participating should be paired in groups that include at least one adult.
- Pass out bins, boxes, bags to collect invasives.
- Communicate to everyone where they should bring the invasives once they’ve been collected.

**Closing:**
- It’s always fun to quantify your efforts. For example, if you’re removing [garlic mustard](#) or [air potatoes](#) you can have each group count how many they’ve removed, or count how many bags, etc., and report back on your efforts.
- Thank everyone for coming and for their hard work, and talk about next steps.
PLANTING A WILDFLOWER GARDEN

**Topic:** Biodiversity

**Objective:** To empower youth to create an event that educates themselves and their communities about rapid bee species loss and how planting native wildflowers can make a difference.

**Supplies:**
- Soil (if needed)
- Sand (if needed)
- Several buckets to mix seeds with sand and for mulch
- Mulch
- Seeds - When purchasing wildflower seeds, make sure you’re getting 100% native seeds to your area, and not filler. Get a mixture of annuals (bloom once) or perennials (lives more than 2 years)
- 3 rakes (if needed)
- Access to a water supply
- Several watering cans or a hose and spray nozzle
- Table and chairs (for information day of event)
- Each participant should have a pair of gardening gloves, comfortable shoes, a water bottle, and sun protection.

**Note:** The planning phase can start in April, with planting occurring mid-September to the end of October depending on your location. Consult with local specialists in your community as you’re planning for best time to plant in your local area.

**Prep work:**
- Familiarize yourself with these resources before beginning your project:
  - [Sowing Wildflowers for Spring Color](#)
  - [How to Plant Wildflower Seed for Early Spring Flowers](#)
  - [How to Plant a Wildflower Meadow, Part 1 & How to Plant a Wildflower Meadow, Part 2](#)
  - [5 Tips for Growing Wildflowers with Kids](#)

**Kick off your wildflower garden planning on Earth Day!**
- Identify and consult with knowledgeable adults within your community like naturalists and members of plant societies.
- Site Evaluation: Take a look around your faith community’s grounds and identify a good place to grow wildflowers. Look for raised beds, window boxes, or other spaces. Typically, you’ll want an area that gets at least four hours of sunlight per day.
- As part of your site evaluation, determine if you’re going to need to weed the area before planting, measure and record the size of the area, and note if you’re going to need to add soil.
- Depending on the size of the area, you may want to first use the Lead an Invasive Species Clean-Up one-pager found on page 21 to prepare the soil.
- If the area you’ve identified has densely compacted soil you may need to factor in tilling the area. Consult with adults in your community and make an action plan.
- Identify items that you’ll need (see supplies below), and create a budget.

**Late spring:**
- Meet with adult leadership and tell them your idea about planting a wildflower garden.
- Request money to support your efforts or create a fundraising plan

**Late spring/summer:**
- Late spring and summer are great times to raise money for your project. Work with adults to help coordinate and carry out fundraising.
- Educate yourself about [native plant species in your community](#) and create a list of native flowers that you’d like to incorporate in your garden.
- Call or visit plant nurseries in your area to find out who sells native wildflowers
- Put together a shopping list. (Your local nursery can help you determine how much soil, mulch, and wildflower seed you’ll need. You’ll need to provide them with the dimensions of the area you’re seeding and information on the consistency of the soil.)
Early fall:
• Purchase items for your wildflower planting.
• Decide if your group will manage the project or do the planting yourselves.
• If you’re managing, outline responsibilities and how many people you’ll need, and engage others in your wildflower planting to take place mid-September through the end of October.
• Invite your religious leader to attend the event and offer a blessing.

Welcome/Introduction:
• Around the world, we’re experiencing a significant decline in bee species. This is a problem because humans need bees to pollinate plants that we depend on for food. As humans, we have a special responsibility to help bees and other insects. A great way to protect bee species is to plant native wildflowers.
• Even the smallest patch of land or window box can be transformed into an area that fosters biodiversity and protects species. Planning ahead and communicating with those who usually have the power to make decisions and purchases will help you have a great project!

Activity:
The majority of this activity takes place in the planning stages. Here are some things to consider on the day of your project:
• Have supplies ready within close proximity of your project
• Set up an information table about the wildflowers you’ll be planting.
• Thank everyone for coming and have your religious leader offer a blessing.
• Talk briefly about the importance of native wildflowers to protect bee species.
• If you’ve determined that it’s best to mix your seeds with sand, do so and assign one (or more) individuals to disperse the mixture in the designated area.
• Assign several people to rake the area.
• After raking is completed, everyone can join in and gently step on the seeds to compact them.
• Assign another group of individuals to disperse the mulch.
• Assign someone knowledgeable about watering, and responsible to water your planting.
• For the first several weeks of your planting, the area should be watered several times a day. Coordinate with adults and staff on a schedule.

Closing:
• Clean up
• Thank everyone for coming!
• Talk about when you expect the wildflowers to begin growing.

Follow-up:
• At the end of the growing season, it is recommended to mow the area. Coordinate with adults to make a plan.
**SILENT WALK (REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY)**

**AGEs 13-14**

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**Welcome/Introduction:**

Introduce the history of Earth Day to the students, and what it is or what they know about Earth Day, ask them what they know about the “4 R’s” (reduce, refuse, reuse, recycle). Select a story, piece of scripture, or other prayer material that connects to being stewards of the earth for students to focus on, at the teacher’s discretion. See Prayer Resource Page for examples.

**Activity:**

Have students take a walk (about 15-30 minutes depending on time) through the neighborhood, or even a park if accessible. During the walk, have students remain slow and silent, paying special attention to the natural world (trees, plants, animals, etc.) and for anything that seems out of place. Encourage students to pay attention to smells and sounds, but caution students to not touch anything if they do not know what it is. Students should note these observations in their journal. After finishing, have the students share their observations, with if any students noticed similar things, see if any individual observations were made and, encourage all students to share their unique perspective.

**Closing:**

Ask the students what they have learned today. Identify what they noticed about the natural world and any major “out of place” items, such as litter during their walk. Are these “out of place” items a problem? Why or why not? What could they do collectively going forward? What would they like to do?
**Watershed Wilma/Wilbur Sculpture**

**Topic:** Creating a Healthy Watershed for Species

**Objective:** Throughout this lesson, place an emphasis on rapid species loss and how we can all make a difference. Also teach participants the four key ideas of waste reduction: reduce, refuse, reuse, and recycle. Then give participants the opportunity to put these ideas into action by collecting trash and turning them into a work of art. This in turn creates a sense of agency among the students through education and application, in turn manifesting the idea that you can be any age and be a steward of the planet.

**Supplies:**
- Life-sized armature
- Paper bags to collect trash
- Gardening gloves for each participant
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- Scissors

**Prep work:**
This project requires some planning several months out. First, you'll need to find a volunteer to build a life-sized armature. There are several options including building one out of reclaimed wood or with paper mache. Connect with art teachers, engineers, builders or DIY aficionados to help with the design and construction.

The life-sized armature can be reused year after year, so you'll need to consider having a place to store it.

Challenge your group to explore their own backyards and bring found items with them leading up to the project. For a successful sculpture, you'll need a found ball for the head, and clothing like an old jacket or old shirt and jeans. Before adding found items to the sculpture, you'll want to secure the head (from a ball) and clothing.

**Welcome/Introduction:**
Improper disposal of trash, especially plastic, can be very harmful to wildlife in watersheds. Creating an ethic of responsibility for the appropriate disposal of plastics and other trash starts in our own communities. This project helps us better understand how much mismanaged trash can accumulate in our own backyards and within the grounds of our faith communities, negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of our waterways and species.

**Activity:**
Depending on your faith tradition, this intergenerational activity can take place within or outside of time set aside for religious education. Each participant should have a pair of gardening gloves, and precaution should be taken to educate participants about what kind of trash is safe to pick up (cans, bottles, etc. and what isn’t (broken glass, needles, etc.). In small groups, participants will gather trash in paper bags. After a set period of time, participants will bring their found trash to a central location and an adult will assist in the construction of the watershed sculpture by using a hot glue gun to adhere items.

**Closing:**
Ask the participants what they have learned today? What can they do to take better care of our watersheds and the species that live within them? Why are things like recycling important? Why is it important to consider that “Everyday should be Earth Day”? What should be their next steps to fight pollution in their community?
Discussion Starters for Teens and Adults:

CATHOLICISM

Links:
- Catholic Ecology’s Data Series #3, Biodiversity Lost
- Catholic Social Teaching 101: Care for Creation
- Meet the Nuns Helping Save a Sacred Species From Extinction

Activity: Have everyone read the blog and watch the videos below. Look for correlations between faith, rapid species loss, and action.

Discussion Guiding Questions:

The following questions can be used to help guide the conversation:

• In “Biodiversity Lost”, Dr. Raven suggests that “people are preoccupied by daily life... and don’t take time to reflect on how, as a group they impact the larger world”. What are some strategies we can take to become less preoccupied by daily life and make time for reflection?

• What are the connections between rapid species loss and poverty? How might that impact how we address rapid species loss in our community and greater world?

• What are concrete actions we can take today and in the future to reduce species loss in our community?

CHRISTIANITY

Link:
- The Environmentalist’s Dilemma: Plants or People?

Activity #1: Listen to an excerpt (10:36 to 50:11) from Rev. Edward Brown, Director and CEO of Care of Creation speak at the Urbana 2012, InterVarsity’s Student’s Missions Conference.

Discussion Guiding Question:

• Answer Rev. Brown’s question, “How do we get from here, where we are, to there, where we have a world that reflects God’s goals of proclaiming his name, establishing his kingdom, and caring for people in these ways?”

Activity #2: Watch this video on the Blessed Earth website. Link: Sleeth Family Journey

Discussion Guiding Questions:

• The first job that God gave to humanity was to “tend and protect” (Genesis 2:15) the planet. What grade would you give humanity as caretakers of God’s creation? Give some examples.

• Dr. Sleeth says there are no chestnut trees on Chestnut Street, no elms on Elm Street, and no caribou in Caribou, Maine. As Christians, why should we care? Genesis tells us that humans have dominion over creation. Yet dominion implies tremendous responsibility. What are some practical ways you can be a better caretaker of the planet?
### ISLAM

**Activity:** Have everyone read the following articles. While reading, look for correlations between faith and environment.

**Discussion Guiding Questions:**

The following can be used to help guide the conversation:

- What is the role of nature in Islam?
- What are some current problems with the environment and where can Islam come into play?
- After reading, “The Eco-Mosque Checklist—7 Steps to a Greener Mosque,” ask what the group can do to create a “greener mosque”? Can any of these actions be translated to our everyday life as well?

**Links:**

- [Tehran Declaration on Environment, Religion and Culture](#)
- [The Eco-Mosque Checklist – 7 Steps To A Greener Mosque](#)

### JUDAISM

**Activity:** Have everyone read the following articles. While reading, look for correlations between faith and the environment.

**Discussion Guiding Questions:**

The following can be used to help guide the conversation:

- What does Bal Tashhit say about rapid species loss?
- How much did you know about the issue of rapid species loss before today?
- What can you and your peers do to foster healthy biodiversity in your communities, temples, and homes?

**Links:**

- [Jewish Values: Protecting Endangered Species](#)
- [Ten Teachings on Judaism and the Environment](#)

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM


**Discussion Guide**

- [Jewish Values: Protecting Endangered Species](#)
- [Ten Teachings on Judaism and the Environment](#)
Engaging Teens & Adults in Action to Protect These Plants and Animals:

- Bees
- Birds
- Coral Reefs
- Elephants
- Fish
- Giraffes
- Great Apes
- Insects
- Plants
- Sharks
- Trees
- Whales
Help to Reduce the Threat of Plastic Pollution on Wildlife:

Improper disposal of plastic, from fishing lines, to single-use plastic such as soda bottles and rings, can be very harmful to wildlife. In fact, the United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that mismanaged plastic waste, compared to other waste, has the most detrimental impact on the environment, including wildlife.

You, your family, and faith community can make a significant impact by educating yourselves on how the use of plastics impacts the local ecosystem.

Having individuals calculate their plastic consumption, commit to bringing their own bag to the grocery store, recycle what (little) plastic they may consume, host a plastic-free potluck, or by creating a sculpture from found objects in your environment, to educate your community about the effects of pollution, are just a few of the ways your faith community can make a difference.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, Virginia participates in an Earth Day Sunday watershed clean-up by creating a sculpture from found objects in their environment. See page 25 to learn how to make your own Watershed Wilbur or Wilma. (Photo Watershed Wilbur, Earth Day 2008)

LEARN ABOUT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Download here Earth Day Network’s Plastic Pollution And Primer Toolkit

ACT: REDUCE, REFUSE, REUSE, RECYCLE, REMOVE:

The worksheet beginning on page 26 allows you to understand your own plastic consumption, as well as how you can contribute to the five Rs (Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, Recycle, Remove). The worksheet can be printed and used for an individual, family, or faith community.
1. REDUCE

The most important step we can take to limit plastic pollution is to reduce the amount of plastic we consume. We cannot only be responsible for what happens to products at the end of their lifecycle; we have to be responsible for which products we purchase in the first place.

When considering anything you may purchase, ask yourself these two questions:
• Do I need it?
• Can I use something else?

By reducing your plastic consumption, you will directly and actively reduce the amount of plastic that makes it into the environment.

2. REFUSE

It is important, whenever possible, to refuse plastic. Much of the most frequently discarded plastic items are those given to us for free. Plastic straws, grocery bags, plastic utensils, and more are all frequently given away with purchases.

All you have to do to eliminate this source of plastic pollution is to simply refuse to accept these items. This will have a large impact on your overall plastic pollution footprint.

3. REUSE

Many of the items we use one time before disposal are plastic. This leads to unnecessary waste for low usability. Selecting devices for multiple uses and making sure nothing is thrown away before its usefulness is spent, is another effective way to reduce one’s plastic pollution. Get creative and reuse items for secondary purposes. You can also purchase specialty items that replace single use plastics and can safely be used again and again.

4. RECYCLE

For the most part, only recycle if you are positive that the item is truly recyclable. If you are unsure about an item, don’t try to recycle it as it will only slow the sorting process. Educating yourself on proper recycling crucial to its effectiveness. Recycling properly might feel daunting at times, but once you figure out the rules in your community it will all feel easier.

5. REMOVE

The fact of the matter is that there is already an immense amount of plastic pollution dirtying our waterways and harming the planet’s organisms. We need to work to clean up the world’s oceans and to find a way to deal with all the plastic we collect.

Here are some ways that you, and your faith community can partake in the removal process:
• Start a beach or river clean-up in your local community
• Support the work of organizations removing plastic from the environment
• Purchase innovative products created from recovered ocean or environmental plastics
**CALCULATING YOUR PLASTIC CONSUMPTION: PLASTIC FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR**

The tools below can help you get an idea of your own plastic consumption, while also setting goals to improve. The plastic footprint calculator will help you to calculate your total yearly consumption of plastic products. This will allow you to analyze your plastic consumption. Then you can use the Personal Plastic Plan to help you reduce your plastic footprint over the course of a year. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and if applicable to you.

**How many of the following items do you consume every day?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHART 1 (Daily)</th>
<th>#/DAY</th>
<th>#/YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic bottles</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic cups</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straws</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton swabs with plastic sticks</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette butts</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic resealable bags</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic cling wrap</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic silverware</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic plates</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food containers</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 365 =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHART 1: Total # consumed / year:**

*(Majority of cigarette butts or filters are made from fibrous material called cellulose acetates, a kind of plastic that are thin tows that are packed tightly to form a filter [source]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHART 2 (Monthly)</th>
<th>#/MONTH</th>
<th>#/YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Packaging **</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic grocery bags</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning containers***</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothbrushes</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine bottles</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diapers</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine products</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHART 2: Total # consumed / year:**

**(Plastic bags for produce, produce in plastic packaging, large beverage containers.*** Dish washer fluid, laundry detergent, fabric softener etc.)
**PERSONAL PLASTIC PLAN:**

Were you surprised by the amount of plastic you consume? Consider creating a Personal Plastic Plan as a way to Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, and Recycle in your everyday life.

**Reduce:** What can you do differently to reduce your plastic consumption?

1.  
2.  
3.  

**Refuse:** What can you do differently to refuse plastic?

1.  
2.  
3.
**Reuse:** What can you do differently to reuse more?

1.

2.

3.

**Recycle:** What can you do to ensure you are recycling properly?

1.

2.

3.

**Remove:** What can you do to help remove plastic from the environment?

1.

2.

3.
MAKE A PLAN

We invite you to review your results from the plastic pollution footprint calculator (page 4) and determine which plastic products contribute most to your plastic pollution footprint. Then, we suggest that you determine if any of the items on the list could be easily given up completely. After that, determine how you could reduce, refuse, reuse, or recycle other items on the list.

Check the column that corresponds with the action you intend to pursue to decrease your plastic pollution footprint of a specific plastic item. Then write down a short explanation of the way you intend to do this.

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<tr>
<th>CHART 1</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Refuse</th>
<th>Reuse</th>
<th>Recycle</th>
<th>HOW?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example - Plastic bottles</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Buy reusable water bottle and pitcher to filter water.</td>
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<td>Plastic bottles</td>
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<td>Plastic cups</td>
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<td>Straws</td>
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<td>Cotton swabs w/ plastic sticks</td>
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<td>Cigarette butts</td>
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<td>Plastic resealable bags</td>
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<td>Plastic cling wrap</td>
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<td>Plastic silverware</td>
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<td>Plastic plates</td>
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<td>Food containers</td>
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<th>CHART 2</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
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<td>Food Packaging</td>
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<td>Plastic grocery bags</td>
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<td>Cleaning containers</td>
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<td>Toothbrushes</td>
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<td>Toothpaste</td>
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<td>Medicine bottles</td>
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<td>Diapers</td>
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<td>Feminine products</td>
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</table>
Other Resources about the Protection of the Environment

INTERFAITH RESOURCES

Earth Ministry
Parliament of The World’s Religions We Are Still In
Sign the Parliament Declaration on Climate Change
Global Warming from a Religious Perspective
The Poverty of Global Climate Change
Articles on Faith and the Environment
ENERGY STAR for Congregations
Videos

BUDDHISM

One Hundred and Eight Things You Can Do To Help The Environment
16 Core Dharma Principles Important To Address Climate Change and How Dharma Practitioners Can Engage
Practical Steps Towards Protection of the Environment
A Clean Environment Is a Human Right
The Dalai Lama on protecting the environment
Climate Change, Ethics, and the Field of Greed

CATHOLICISM

Take Action
Laudato Si’: On Care For Our Common Home Discussion Guide
10 Catholic Ways to Celebrate Earth Day
Beyond a Throwaway Culture: Reduce Waste-Grow Community
Laudato Si’ On Care for Our Common Home
Advice for us on the path, from the Holy Father’s Address to Bishops in Lima: think about how we get to the other shore…
Laudato Si’ Animation for Children | CAFOD
Climate Change, Asian Impacts and Response
All Creation Gives God Praise: Protecting Biodiversity in a Time of Climate Crisis

CHRISTIANITY

Environmental Guide for Faith communities, Their Buildings, and Grounds
God’s Earth, Our Home
Earth Day Sunday 2018: Sense of Place
Creation Themes Throughout Scripture
Town Hall Toolkit
An Evangelical Movement Takes on Climate Change
Season of Creation Four
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<th>HINDUISM</th>
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<td>The Hidden Forest</td>
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<td>Green Temples Guide</td>
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<td>10 Hindu Environmental Teachings</td>
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<td>Hinduism and the Environment</td>
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<td>How Do We Treat the Environment?</td>
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<td>Śaivite Hindu Religion, Book Three for Children Ages 7 to 9</td>
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<th>ISLAM</th>
<th>Teacher’s Guidebook for Islamic Environmental Education</th>
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<td>Muslim Green Guide to Reducing Climate Change</td>
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<td>Reduce, Reuse, Recycle The throwaway society</td>
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<td>Schools4Trees</td>
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<td>Tower Hamlets – Faith recycling Programme</td>
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<td>Greening our Ramadan</td>
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<td>The Eco-Mosque Checklist – 7 Steps To A Greener Mosque</td>
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<td>Green Muslims Khutbah Guide Facts, Figures, Fiqh, and Fard</td>
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<td>Web Comic Greening Islam</td>
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<th>JUDAISM</th>
<th>Program Bank: Environmental Activities for Shavuot</th>
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<td>A Guide to Synagogue Social Action</td>
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<td>Ten Jewish Teachings on Judaism and the Environment</td>
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<td>Jewish Values on Climate Change &amp; Energy</td>
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<td>True Shalom for Planet Earth</td>
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<td>Toward a Greener Judaism</td>
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<td>How To Benchmark Energy Use</td>
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<td>Living Sustainably</td>
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<th>SIKHISM</th>
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<td>5 Simple Ways Sikhs Can Help The Planet</td>
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<td>10 Ways To Be Eco-Friendly</td>
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<td>Gurbani Shabads</td>
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<td>Sikh Theology of Food</td>
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<td>Sikhism and Environment</td>
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<td>Short Movies for Sikh Environment Day</td>
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<td>A Sikh Response to Global Warming and Climate Change</td>
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## References

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<th>Opening Prayer</th>
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<td><strong>BAHA’I</strong></td>
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| “Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God has been made, and God’s praise glorified.”  
*Baha ‘Ullah* | O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.  
*‘Abdu’l-Bahá* | “Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.”  
*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks* |
| **BUDDHISM**   |                              |                |
| **Prayer of Lovingkindness**  
May all beings be peaceful.  
May all beings be happy.  
May all beings be safe.  
May all beings awaken to the light of their true nature.  
May all beings be free.  
*Metta Prayer* | “However innumerable beings are, I vow to save them.”  
*One of the Four Vows of the Bodhisattva, taken from Agape Love: A Tradition Found in Eight World Religions by Sir John Templeton, 1999, Templeton Press.* | **Prayer of Lovingkindness**  
May all beings be peaceful.  
May all beings be happy.  
May all beings be safe.  
May all beings awaken to the light of their true nature.  
May all beings be free.  
*Metta Prayer* |
| **CHRISTIANITY** |                              |                |
| **Prayer to the Lord of Creation**  
Come Lord Christ, king of the earth, lead us as we walk with you that the earth may be healed.  
Come, Holy Spirit hovering over the water and guide us as we sail to you, that the waters may flow with life.  
Come, you angels of the fire and light and show us how to dance with you, that in the light may be born the flame of love.  
Come, you breath of the air, and inspire us with the breath of you, that the air may reverberate with the sound of the word.  
Come, Lady Mary and the saints of heaven and help us to pray with you, that the earth may be redeemed through the love of Christ.  
*By Brendanus Scotus, found in Lord of Creation* | Creation has its own relationship with God, in some measure independently of humankind and beyond human understanding: it glorifies and worships God in continuous praise.  
*Psalms 96:12; Isaiah 55:12.* | “God declares the creation good. We are among God’s creatures, and humbled that God calls on us to till and keep the earth. With hope and inspiration to answer that call, we place our trust in God to show us the way.”  
*From Creation Justice Ministry’s Earth Day 2016 Resource, Care for God’s Creatures.* |
### CATHOLICISM

Dear God, thank you for this beautiful planet. Bless it and keep it safe from harm. We pray for the protection of the animals, the soil, air and water. May we care for all you have made. Help us to love the Earth as you do. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

“The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.”

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI

“Creator God, We thank you for all your gifts. Thank you for the sky and clouds, for waterways and deserts, For mountains and valleys, For the moon and the stars. Thank you for the gift of the Earth. We make this prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Prayers and scripture reading from the 2017 Catholic Climate Covenant’s Earth Day Guide that were adapted from Prayers for Creation: An Ecoschools Resource, compiled by the Committee for Social Justice and the Office of Religious & Family Life Education, Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, 2008

### THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

As beneficiaries of this divine creation, we should care for the earth, be wise stewards over it, and preserve it for future generations. The earth and all things on it are part of God’s plan for the redemption of His children and should be used responsibly to sustain the human family (see 1 Nephi 17:36; Moses 1:39; Abraham 3:24–25).

https://www.lds.org/topics/environmental-stewardship-and-conservation?lang=eng#

“I believe in beauty. The earth in its pristine beauty is an expression of the nature of its Creator…. I believe in the beauty of nature—the flowers, the fruit, the sky, the peaks and the plains from which they rise. I see and believe in the beauty of animals….I believe in beauty—the beauty of God’s unspoiled creations, the beauty of his sons and daughters who walk without whimpering, meeting the challenges of each new day.”

The Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, 248, 249.

“If we are respectful of the planet, the creation, if we have a humble and a meek attitude toward the creations of our Heavenly Father, each of us in some way can indeed make a difference. That may mean doing something as simple as turning off a water tap that’s running, or cleaning our home and property so it’s pleasant and beautiful, or being careful in how we use energy so we don’t waste resources. It may mean treating domestic animals with kindness and compassion, or doing what we can to pick up litter and clean up local areas. I think the issue is not what we do; it’s that we do something, and that we do it with an attitude of praise.”

Paul Cox
<table>
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<tr>
<th>SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION</th>
<th>Scripture/Reading/Quote/Story</th>
<th>Closing Prayer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Christians are called by God to exercise caring stewardship and dominion over the earth and environment (Genesis 1:28)</td>
<td>In May, 2010, a mother wrote into the Christian Post's guest columnist, Rev. Billy Graham with a concern that her daughter felt called by God to take care of animals by volunteering at a local animal shelter. Rev. Graham responded by saying this, “...let me assure you that God is concerned about our care of every part of His creation - including the animals. After all, He made them, and ultimately they belong to Him. The Bible says, ‘For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills’” (Psalm 50:10). And what your daughter is doing is a good thing in God’s eyes, for He is concerned about the way we treat animals (especially those that depend on us). The Bible says, “A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal” (Proverbs 12:10). On the day God made the animals, the Bible tells us that He pronounced it good (see Genesis 1:25). Should we ignore or treat cruelly something that God calls good? Of course not. Someone who is thoughtless or cruel to animals is also likely to be thoughtless or cruel to other people - who are made in God’s image.”</td>
<td>“Let us be a consoling, understanding, loving, and forgiving people toward all of God's creation.”</td>
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<td>EPISCOPAL CHURCH</td>
<td>“Let us pray. O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty. Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness. For the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”</td>
<td>“Let us be a consoling, understanding, loving, and forgiving people toward all of God's creation.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“All tithes of the land, whether in grain from the field or in the fruit from the trees, belong to the Lord, as sacred to Him.” Leviticus 27:30</td>
<td>Creation Justice Ministry, Care for God’s Creatures resource</td>
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<td>EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA</td>
<td>“The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy. Psalm 65:12-13”</td>
<td>“Let us be a consoling, understanding, loving, and forgiving people toward all of God's creation.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We live within the covenant God makes with all living things, and are in relationship with them...We must listen to the people who fish the sea, harvest the forest, till the soil, and mine the earth, as well as to those who advance the conservation, protection, and preservation of the environment...”</td>
<td>Creation Justice Ministry, Care for God’s Creatures resource</td>
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<td>From The Evangelical Lutherans website</td>
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<td><strong>PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)</strong></td>
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| “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.”  

*NRS Psalm 104:24* | Job 12:7 “But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you.” | “May God bless the animals of the earth and sea and air with security of habitat, plentiful food and clean water. May God bless creatures that are endangered with our concern and protection. May God bless our efforts to ensure that no creature is exploited or forgotten.”  

*Creation Justice Ministry, Care for God’s Creatures resource* |
| **QUAKER** | | |
| Earth Prayer (Janet Soderberg)  
“Divine Creator, Spirit in All Things, Your kingdom is Here, and Now. Your creativity is manifest everywhere I look on this heavenly Earth. Nourish us Body and Soul in this earthly Paradise.  
Forgive us for not noticing, for overlooking, the tiny, the subtle. The seemingly insignificant beauty in your Creation.  
And teach us how to forgive those who would harm your Great Works. Make our Loving attention constant.  
Deliver us from Ingratitude.  
For You are our perfect Guide through the Delights of our sacred Home.” | “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”  

*Matthew 5:14-16* | “Dear Mother/Father God: Thank you for this greening Earth, for the creatures large and small. Thank you for the delicate and intricate systems that sustain us. Help us, Dear Lord, to live in harmony with Creation, honoring our covenant to you to live in balance and beauty. Help us to harmonize our longings with our needs as we encourage others to do the same. Guide us in wisdom so that we may educate as well as challenge those who are harming your design. Continue to show us your presence in all created things, in the sun and the moon, in the soil and in the air, in the unfurling leaf and in the wood drake’s nest. We ask this in the name of our Lord, amen.”  

*quakercare.org* |
| **THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** | | |
| “O God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen: You place us in your creation, and you command us to care for it. Your works declare glory and splendor, and you call us to praise and reverence. Where we have degraded or destroyed earth’s bounty, forgive us. Where we have taken beauty and majesty for granted, have mercy upon us. Where we have become estranged from the creatures with whom we share this planet, grant us your peace. Renew us in the waters of baptism, refresh us with the winds of your spirit, and sustain us with the bread of life. In the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the new creation, we pray. Amen.”  

*Rev. Ken Carter, pastor of Providence United Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina* | “All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. Therefore, we repent of our devastation of the physical and non-human world. Further, we recognize the responsibility of the Church toward lifestyle and systemic changes in society that will promote a more ecologically just world and a better quality of life for all creation.”  

*UMC Social Principle, “The Natural World* | May God bless the animals of the earth and sea and air with security of habitat, plentiful food and clean water. May God bless creatures that are endangered with our concern and protection. May God bless our efforts to ensure that no creature is exploited or forgotten.  

*Creation Justice Ministry, Care for God’s Creatures resource* |
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<td>Prayer from the Atharva Veda, one of Hinduism’s most sacred texts.</td>
<td>“Every living creature is the son of the supreme Lord, and He does not tolerate even ants being killed” <em>Bhikvedanta Swāmī Prabhupada A.C. Purport, Bhagavad Gita As It Is 14.16 <a href="http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=116">http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=116</a></em></td>
<td>“Nature’s beauty is an art of God. Let us feel the touch of God’s invisible hands in everything beautiful. By the first touch of His hand rivers throb and ripple. When He smiles the sun shines, the moon glimmers, the stars twinkle, the flowers bloom. By the first rays of the rising sun, the universe is stirred; the shining gold is sprinkled on the smiling buds of rose; the fragrant air is filled with sweet melodies of singing birds, the dawn is the dream of God’s creative fancy.” <em>Rig Veda 1.6.3</em></td>
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<td>“Supreme Lord, let there be peace in the sky and in the atmosphere. Let there be peace in the plant world and in the forests. Let the cosmic powers be peaceful. Let the Brahma, the true essence and source of life, be peaceful. Let there be undiluted and fulfilling peace everywhere” <em><a href="http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=116">http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=116</a></em></td>
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<td><strong>ISLAM</strong></td>
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<td>“Do not cut down a tree, Do not abuse a river, Do not harm animals, And be always kind and humane to God’s creation, even to your enemies.” <em>Abu-Baker <a href="https://uri.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/Multi-Faith%20Prayers%20on%20Environment%20RFP.pdf">https://uri.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/Multi-Faith%20Prayers%20on%20Environment%20RFP.pdf</a></em></td>
<td>He has lifted the sky. He has set the balance in order for you not to exceed it – weigh with justice – and not to fall short in it (Qur’an, 55:7-9)</td>
<td>All the creatures that crawl on the earth and those that fly with their wings are communities like yourselves. (Qur’an, 6:38)</td>
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<td><strong>JAINISM</strong></td>
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<td>One who disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water, and vegetation disregards his or her own existence which is entwined with them. <em>Mahavir <a href="https://uri.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/Multi-Faith%20Prayers%20on%20Environment%20RFP.pdf">https://uri.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/Multi-Faith%20Prayers%20on%20Environment%20RFP.pdf</a></em></td>
<td>“Lord Mahavira preached about the environment in the first book of ‘Acharanga Sutra’, which is accepted, as His direct words. The elements of nature were described as living beings and under the fundamental principle of AHIMSA these were to be protected in all ways - no waste, no overuse, no abuse, no polluting. If we follow these principles, then we would stop destroying our environment as well as preserve the resources that are available for all to share. If there are more resources available for all, then the poor will also get a fair share thereof.” <em>Quotation from R. P. Chandaria, Chairman of the Institute of Jainology, 15 August 2008. <a href="http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=167">http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.asp?pageID=167</a></em></td>
<td>May the entire universe be blessed; May all beings engage in each other’s well being. May all weakness, sickness and faults diminish; May everyone everywhere be healthy, peaceful and happy in all respects. <em>From the JAINA Education Committee’s resource JAINISM Religion of Compassion and Ecology</em></td>
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### JUDAISM

“But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you; Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In the Lord’s hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all humankind.”

*Job 12:7-10*

Our scripture reading today is from Jeremiah 9: 10-14.

10 “I will take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled and are gone...

11 Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the LORD spoken, that he may declare it? Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through?13 And the LORD says: “Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice or walked in accord with it,14 but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their fathers taught them.”

*Rebbe Shneur Zalman, Tanya 42*

### PAGANISM

Mother of Plenty, Bless this Bread  
Father of the Grain, Lend Your Seed  
Let it nourish Heart and Head  
Let it nourish Thought and Deed  
Let its breaking be a Spell  
That hungry mouths be fed as well  
And let its eating keep Us Free  
As is our Will  
Blessed Be!

*Wiccan prayer  
https://www.greenhearted.org/prayers-for-the-earth.html*

From the Mother I was born, and to the Mother I will return.  
I walk the Elder Ways, a Child of Earth.  
With each step the Earth Mother blesses me.  
With sacred soil beneath me, sweet waters around me, and caressing air above me. As my forebears before me, as those who come after me, so may I stand before the Mother today and give her honor.  
Hail to Nerthus, goddess of old, matron of the the living land.

*Jeremy Baer*

Giver of life, great Mother Earth,  
To each of the Kindred you gave birth,  
Lady of river, grain, milk and sea,  
Source of the land’s fertility, We thank you for all the gifts that you give, This beautiful world, on which we live.

*Rev. Kathleen Pezza*
### SIKHISM

You, Yourself created the Universe, and You are pleased... You, Yourself the bumblebee, flower, fruit and the tree.
You, Yourself the water, desert, ocean and the pond. You, Yourself are the big fish, tortoise and the Cause of causes.

*Guru Granth Sahib, Maru Sohele, 1020*

“Men, trees, pilgrimage places, banks of sacred streams, clouds, fields. Islands, spheres, universes, continents, solar systems. The sources of creation, egg-born, womb-born, earth-born, sweat-born, oceans, mountains and sentient beings. He, the Lord, knows their condition, O Nanak. Nanak, having created beings, the Lord takes care of them all. The creator who created the world, He takes thought of it as well.”

*Guru Granth Sahib page 1016*

As Guru Nanak Ji said: Pawan Guru pani pita mata dharat mahat (Air is our teacher, water our father and the great sacred earth is our mother). If we act now, we can protect our atmosphere, water resources and earth for ourselves and for future generations.

greenfaith.org

### TAOISM

Daode jing 13. . . Respect the world as your self:
The world can be your lodging.
Love the world as your self:
The world can be your trust

The flower invites the butterfly with no-mind;
The butterfly visits the flower with no-mind.
The flower opens, the butterfly comes;
The butterfly comes, the flower opens.
I don’t know others,
Others don’t know me.
By not-knowing we follow nature’s course.

*Ryokan*

Daode jing 13. . . Respect the world as your self:
The world can be your lodging.
Love the world as your self:
The world can be your trust

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

“We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth and the energy of action.”

*UUA Tapestry of Faith Curriculum*

Children of the earth and sky, we are nurtured, sustained, given warmth and light from above and below. Supported by earth’s strong, firm crust, we build our homes, till the fields, plant our gardens and orchards. When we turn from self and seek to be aware, we will find holy light in human faces, in blossom, birdsong, and sky. Then earth is truly our home, and we are one with all earth’s creatures, Parents of earth’s children yet to be.

*Alice Berry*

As we go forth from this sacred space,
May we celebrate Earth and our shared lives,
May we recognize our connections to all that is in and on Earth,
May we truly and deeply value the inherent worth of all
In this awesome interconnected web of existence,
May we commit ourselves to a new way,
And may we hold our commitments and each other gently yet firmly.
Blessed be and Amen.

*Diana Smith*
ENDNOTES

1. https://www.earthday.org/2018/05/18/populations-of-living-things-across-all-species-are-declining-and-this-is-very-worrisome/#_ftn1
2. https://www.earthday.org/2018/05/18/populations-of-living-things-across-all-species-are-declining-and-this-is-very-worrisome/#_ftn2
3. https://www.earthday.org/2018/05/18/populations-of-living-things-across-all-species-are-declining-and-this-is-very-worrisome/#_ftn4
17. https://www.crd.bc.ca/education/our-environment/concerns/habitat-loss-degradation
22. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2015/oct/20/the-four-horsemen-of-the-sixth-mass-extinction
25. http://www.bioone.org/doi/full/10.2984/1534-6188%282007%2961%5B3%ABAIOP%5D2.0.CO%3B2
27. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2015/oct/20/the-four-horsemen-of-the-sixth-mass-extinction
As faith leaders, you provide the inspiration, hope and action to protect our shared home and elevate the plight of rapid species loss and its effects.

The problem of rapid species extinction impacts core values of all faith traditions: stewardship of the environment on which we all depend, caring for the health of our communities, and the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable.

We invite you to take action to respond to the urgent threat of species extinction, by deepening your understanding of biodiversity and how it is not only intrinsically linked to the production of food, water, and clean air, the control of climate and disease, but also to our spiritual wellbeing.

Your participation in Earth Day 2019 will help elevate the ethical principles of your faith tradition, that inform our relationship with other living things, and start a process for all of us to take personal responsibility.

With this toolkit you will be able to raise awareness among your family, faith community, and others about the problems associated with rapid loss of species, opportunities to make a positive impact, and how this issue is linked to core faith values.

Many faith leaders and communities have participated in Earth Day activities, engaging and inspiring others to imagine and act on what is possible when we work together to protect our Earth.

About Earth Day Network: Growing out of the first Earth Day in the United States in 1970, Earth Day Network now works with more than 50,000 partners in nearly 195 countries to build environmental democracy. More than 1 billion people now participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest civic observance in the world. Earth Day Network works through a combination of education, public policy, and consumer campaigns.